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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

JULY 1977

No. 148

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Nutritive Value Of Foods. When you eat a roast beef sandwich, an apple, and a glass of milk, what are you getting besides a tasty lunch? What food value does each contain? For almost 20 years, homemakers, dietitians, nutritionists and other consumers who need this kind of information to plan nutritionally adequate diets have gone to a USDA bulletin for the answers. The bulletin, "Nutritive Value of Foods," consists mainly of a table of nutritive values of 730 common foods in commonly-used measures: cup, table-spoon, wedge, gallon, etc. And, not only can the publication tell you what nutrients your lunch contains, it also can tell you how much cooked meat you can get from a pound of raw beef roast and how much protein you should eat each day. Recently, USDA's Agricultural Research Service revised "Nutritive Value of Foods" considerably. Some foods no longer in general use have been dropped and about 200 new food items added. In addition, values of phosphorus and potassium have been included in the table; measures and values for all foods reviewed and updated; and new information provided on dairy products, fatty acid content of foods, and enrichment levels of white bread and rolls, white flour, self-rising flour, and products prepared from the flours. Copies of "Nutritive Value of Foods" (G-72) are available for \$1.05 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

BE AWARE AND BEWARE

Know Your Souvenirs. Every 12 minutes an enemy tries to run the U.S. border. Not a human enemy, but an agricultural pest that attacks plants or animals. In 1976, USDA port inspectors, looking through luggage of travelers returning to the United States, found 380,000 forbidden plants and plant products and 240,000 pounds of forbidden meat and meat products. The vast majority of people bringing in hazardous items were unaware of the potential harm they pose for American farms, gardens, and forests. Yet, last year foreign pests ravaging our food supply and spoiling our environment ran up costs totaling \$12 billion to control their spread and undo their damage. To avoid adding to the damage, USDA asks travelers to cooperate by leaving harmful agricultural items behind when they return home from a trip abroad. This doesn't mean, however, that all foods, plants, and animal products are prohibited. For a list of all the items that are okay to bring back, write: Travelers' Tips, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.



SUGAR IN THE DIET

Heaping Teaspoons Of Trouble. Diets containing large amounts of sugar can cause obesity and produce some symptoms of the onset of diabetes. Research that helps explain how this can occur was recently reported by scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). In the ARS studies, rats were fed diets containing 54 percent sucrose (table sugar) or 54 percent starch. Otherwise, the animals ate the recommended amounts of fat, protein, minerals, and vitamins. According to the researchers, more of the weight gained by the sucrose-fed rats was in the form of fat than was the weight gained by the starch-fed rats. Too, the rats eating the sugar had higher levels of triglycerides than did the starch-eating rats. High triglyceride levels are considered a factor in heart disease and are common in people with onset diabetes. Even further problems beset the sucrose-fed rats. They topped the starch eaters with higher glucose levels and higher insulin levels. The glucose level is a clue of whether carbohydrates (starches and sugars) are being properly utilized by the body. Starches and sugars in food are broken down in the body into simple sugars, mainly glucose. These simple sugars pass into the blood stream and enter the body cells where they become the main source of energy for the body. Any slow down in the entry of glucose into cells causes glucose levels in the blood to become abnormally high; determining the blood glucose level in one of the tests used in detecting diabetes. As for insulin, it is a hormone that, among other things, aids in the efficient use of glucose by cells. High levels of blood glucose stimulate the body to produce more insulin, which in turn can lead to undesirably high insulin levels in the blood, a condition indicative of diabetes. Injection of insulin aids in the clearing of blood glucose by cells. Slow clearing, even in the presence of insulin injections, suggests cells are not properly using glucose, again a condition that indicates diabetes. In the ARS tests, injected insulin was less effective in lowering glucose in sucrose-fed than in starch-fed rats.

VOLUNTEERS FOR FOOD STAMP OUTREACH

Finding, Informing, Helping. Participants in USDA's Food Stamp Program buy food stamps worth more than the dollar amount they paid. Food stamps can then be spent for food, enabling low-income households to buy more food of greater variety to improve their diets. The Food Stamp Program has been around since 1961 and, since 1973, mandated to operate in every county in the Nation. You may already know all this. Tons of printed materials have been distributed and many hours of radio and television time spent to inform people of the Program and to explain how it works. Yet many people who need food assistance do not know whether they might be eligible for food stamps or even how to find out. This is where the Food Stamp Outreach Program comes in. By law, every State has an Outreach Coordinator who organizes and supervises programs throughout the State to locate, inform, and assist persons who might be eligible for the Food Stamp Program. There are paid staff members but volunteers do much of the outreach work. In Kentucky, Girl Scouts set up and operate food stamp information booths at senior citizen apartment complexes or pass out food stamp information at low-income housing projects. In Jackson, Mich., an elderly blind lady operates a volunteer food stamp outreach activity using the telephone to contact potential food stamp participants and to answer questions about the program. You, an organization you belong to, or the company you work for could be involved in a volunteer food stamp outreach program. Contact your State Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator. For the name and address, contact a local food stamp, welfare, social services, or human resource office or write to Food Stamp Outreach Program, Food Stamp Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

ON BEHALF OF THE ANIMALS

Rover And Tabby Have Rights, Too. Handlers of dogs and cats working in animal acts, such as those seen in circuses, are licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the Animal Welfare Act. The handlers must meet Federal standards of care for the animals as well as see to it that the dogs and cats are not trained cruelly or overworked. In addition, the law sets standards for breeders that sell dogs and cats to pet shows. But "show biz" animals are not the only ones protected. Even if your Rover or Tabby can't add one and one with all four paws, they too have rights under the law. The Act restricts market outlets for strayed or stolen dogs and cats; sets transportation requirements for traveling animals (whether shipped by someone in the pet business or by the pet's owner); and sets standards for the treatment of dogs and cats collected at pounds for later use as laboratory animals. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the USDA agency that administers the Animal Welfare Act, has a leaflet that explains the law as it applies to dogs and cats, including how to ship pets by commercial carrier. The publication also suggests what to do in case your pet is lost, stolen, or "petnapped." For a copy of "The Animal Welfare Act: How It Protects Your Dog and Cat" write to: Program Aid and Information, APHIS/USDA, Federal Building, Room 809A, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

OFF THE PRESSES

New And Revised. USDA has kept the presses busy recently with new publications and revised editions of some old favorites. Among these are:

THE PEANUT--A new leaflet that tells you about the nut that is not a nut, its history and development, its uses and nutritive value, and other facts in a nutshell. Single copies are 50 cents; 100 copies, \$5.00. Order from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

BE SAFE FROM INSECTS IN RECREATION AREAS (G-200)--A revised booklet that tells you how to take along your own SWAT team for protection against creepy crawlers, fliers, and other nuisances for a more enjoyment outing. Copies are 60 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents.

COOKING FOR TWO (PA-1043)--This revised version of a popular USDA cookbook for two--whether young or old--gives recipes for small amounts so you are not eating the same menu for days. There is a recipe for four biscuits, for instance. Copies are \$2.30 each from the Superintendent of Documents.

GETTING THE MOST AND THE BEST

From Fresh Fruits And Vegetables. Colorful mounds, baskets, crates, and trays of fresh fruits and vegetables are joys to behold. The joy can spread to your dinner table and pocketbook if you select produce wisely and care for it properly. Some buying and caring tips are offered by USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service: Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season when prices are usually lower and quality higher. But don't buy just because the price is low; buying more fruits and vegetables than you can use or store properly merely because of low price is a waste of money and good food. Off-quality produce, often reduced in price, may not be a good buy either; waste from decay or other deterioration may offset the price reduction. A few cents extra for fresh produce in good condition and of good quality is a good investment. Handle fresh fruits and vegetables with care, both in the store and at home. Rough handling of fruits and vegetables while you are selecting them causes spoilage and waste. Someone must pay for such produce loss at the stores; in the long run, it will probably be you. Maintain a gentle touch when you get your fresh produce home, refrigerate it properly and prepare it carefully.

TO BUILD A BRIDGE

Take Some Wood And Some Glue And . . . The bridge in the George Washington National Forest, the one that's on Virginia Highway 610, looks like any other sturdy wooden bridge. Actually it is the only one of its kind in the world. Lumber used to construct the bridge was manufactured by a process called Press-Lam. The new process, developed by USDA's Forest Service, turns out dried, smooth lumber from logs in one hour as compared with conventional lumber production--sawing, kiln drying, and planing--which takes days. Besides being speedy, Press-Lam can increase the amount of usable lumber from logs, improve the strength of some lumber products, and allow producers to make lumber larger than the logs used as a raw material. To make a Press-Lam bridge, use a lathe to peel around entire logs, producing long sheets of veneer up to 1/2 inch thick. Cut the veneer into smaller sheets to fit into a log press where combined heat and pressure quickly dries the wood. Coat the still-warm veneer with glue and assemble the sheets, one on top of the other, until the desired thickness is reached. Leftover heat from the drying process cures the glue. Stagger the sheets so each overlaps the joint between the two sheets beneath it. Thus you can make wide panels of infinite length which can be trimmed into smaller timbers of any size, actually creating timbers much larger than the original trees which provided the wood. For instance, the 20-foot-long, 20-inch-deep stringers used on the bridge could be made from logs only 10 or 12 inches in diameter and 4 feet long. Don't worry about knots. The weakness caused by knots is dispersed over an entire piece of wood instead of being concentrated in one location as in sawed lumber. Also you have an estimated 15 to 30 percent more wood to build with. By using the lathe to cut the wood, you have produced no sawdust and the veneer surface is so smooth it does not have to be planed. Peeling around the entire log eliminates much of the waste produced when sawing rectangular lumber out of round logs. Now that you know, go build a bridge.

IT'S YOUR COMMUNITY

What Do You Need? Palmyra, Ill., needed an airport. So, Zelmer Memorial Air Park received a loan of \$37,000 to buy a 27-acre tract of land for the airport. Lee County, Fla., needed a showcase for its county fair. The county got a loan of \$1,450,000 to develop fairgrounds and related facilities. Newport, Ore., needed to improve its boating facilities. The Port of Newport got a \$934,000 loan and installed 400 new wet boat moorages, 150 dry moorages, four boat launches, parking, restrooms, a picnic area and other boat facilities. These loans were made by USDA's Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) under its Community Facility Loan Program. This program is used to make loans for a variety of purposes, depending on the desires and needs of local groups and communities. Loans can be made to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special purpose districts and, in some cases, nonprofit corporations. Communities have used the program to finance hospital and medical facilities; firefighting equipment and facilities; libraries; and construction and improvement of schools. Other communities have used Community Facility loans to meet problems and situations peculiar to their localities. For instance, the Georgia Mountain Fair, Inc. of Hiawassee, Ga., used a \$400,000 loan to construct "Pioneer Village," featuring display buildings, craft shops, and other related facilities depicting the past cultural condition of the area. For information on the Community Facility Loan Program, contact the local FmHA office listed in the telephone directory or Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Special Reports Division, Room 459-A, Washington, D.C. 20250, or telephone 202-447-5437.
